



September 16, 1999

ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM - Protection and Safety: # 2-99

To: Protection and Safety Workers
Protection and Safety Supervisors

From: Chris Hanus, Protection and Safety Division Administrator
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RE: Requirements for Casework in CPS Cases

This memo is to clarify and define the expectations for the completion of CWIS in Child Protective Service cases, and supervisory review of these cases. Information regarding the upcoming file review that will be completed as a follow-up to the Central Registry Study (Oct. 1998), and the criteria for this review is also included.

For all CPS investigations, staff must complete the initial assessment and risk assessment on the CWIS system (attached to this memo is a "process sheet" shared by the Western Service Area which provides step by step instructions to enter the Initial Assessment on CWIS). Once a determination for continued on-going intervention has been made and the child's immediate safety has been ensured, a family assessment must also be completed for all cases on the CWIS system.

Staff are also expected to follow the investigative protocol and other requirements outlined in the March 11, 1999, Administrative Memorandum-Protection and Safety: # 1-99. A copy of this memorandum is attached.

Supervisors are expected to review and document their concurrence with:

1. all initial assessments and risk ratings during the investigative phase;
2. all risk evaluations;
3. all safety plans; and
4. all family assessments

Supervisor review should not delay necessary case processes or actions. The supervisory review should focus on the following:

1. was the investigative protocol followed as outlined in Policy and Guidebook;
2. does the case status determination and documentation exist in the file to support the case status determination.

Supervisors must review all abuse/neglect cases accepted for initial assessment. Each supervisor must verify they have reviewed the file by signing and dating, in the upper right hand corner, a hard copy of the Initial Assessment, Safety Plan or the Risk Evaluation; or, on the CWIS system, by going to the Initial Assessment, Worker initiated consultation point and noting that the file was reviewed, listing the supervisor name and date of review.

As a follow-up to the November, 1998, study of 'Inconclusive'. child abuse and neglect cases, another review of cases files will be conducted. The survey period will be from October 1, 1999, through December 31, 1999. The files from this period will be read in January, 2000, and it is anticipated that a survey report will be issued in February, 2000. The review will be conducted by ACTION for the Protection of Children, the organization which led the 1998 study and will include representation from each Service Area to assist in the review. Attached to this memorandum is the case file criteria which will be used to review each file. We anticipate conducting similar reviews in this area in the future.

The measures outlined in this memorandum will assist us in continuing to improve our services, and insure that we appropriately assess each child who may be at risk. Your contributions and commitment to providing quality services is appreciated. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

cc: Ron Ross, Director
Dennis Loose, Deputy Director
Service Area Administrators
Protection and Safety Division Staff

CWIS INITIAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

1. CREATE RISK EVALUATION (abuse/neglect cases only)
 - * Select risk indicators
 - * Save
2. CREATE SAFETY PLAN (abuse/neglect cases only)
 - * Select safety service types
 - * Save
 - * Complete safety plan narrative basic (three elements) (*do the 1st element on Unfounded cases)
 - * Complete safety plan narrative placement (complete only if child(ren) removed from home - two elements)
 - * Answer safety plan questions basic, adding narrative to each question to explain answer and provide specific case situations that justify answer (7 questions)
 - * Answer safety plan questions placement if child(ren) removed from home, adding narrative to each question to explain answer and provide specific case situations that justify answer (12 questions)
 - * Save
3. CREATE ASSESSMENT (* abuse/neglect cases; ^ status and juvenile offender cases)
 - * ^ Select family strengths
 - * Complete narrative Initial Assessment - AN, all seven elements
 - if case is unfounded, go to Questions and answer questions Initial Assessment - AN (seven questions)
 - * Complete narrative Initial Assessment - AN & Risk, all seven elements, only if case is inconclusive or court substantiated
 - * Complete narrative Initial Assessment - Non AN, all seventeen elements (status offender & juvenile offender cases only)
 - * Complete Summary & Recommendations (for all case status determinations - this is your Investigative Summary, so be very detailed)
 - * Complete Questions Initial Assessment - AN, all seven questions, adding narrative to each question to explain, support and justify answer to question (If Unfounded skip next step and do qualifier questions)
 - * Complete Questions Initial Assessment - AN & Risk, all seven questions, adding narrative to each question to explain, support and justify answer to question
 - * Complete Question Initial Assessment - Qualifiers, all four questions, adding narratives to each question to explain, support and justify answer to question
 - *^Complete Questions Initial Assessment - Non AN, all fourteen questions, adding narratives to each question to explain, support and justify answer to question (status offender & juvenile offender cases only)
 - * Save
4. SUPERVISORY REVIEW
 - * Print Draft of Initial Assessment, Safety Plan, and Risk Evaluation, and give to supervisor for review
 - * Supervisor reviews assessment worksheets for completeness, accuracy and approval of case status determination
 - * When approved, supervisor notes approval of assessment in "consultation point", "worker initiated".
 - * Supervisor then completes Risk Evaluation, Safety Plan, and Assessment once approved
 - * Supervisor prints final copy of assessment worksheets, signs and returns to the worker

CODE BOOK
NEBRASKA CENTRAL REGISTRY STUDY

1. Intake Number : enter CWIS intake number from N-Focus.
2. Master Case Number: enter master case number from N-Focus.
3. Reviewer: see code.
4. Date intake was received: enter date of "date received" field from CWIS intake.
5. Office: see code.
6. Protocol: victim, siblings, non-maltreating caretaker, maltreating caretaker. If law enforcement report indicates that an officer interviewed the child or perpetrator, and there is reason to believe that this interview alone was sufficient for CPS to make a case status determination and assess risk and safety, then this would be a reason to deviate from the protocol. If law enforcement did not cover all the information which CPS must know and the worker did not conduct their own interview, answer "no" to this item.
7. Child interviewed : Indicate yes, no, or cannot determine. Note: For infants and non-verbal children, answer "yes" to this if the worker has documented their observations of the child. If the child is only interviewed by law enforcement, answer this item "no". You could answer "no" to this item and "yes" to item # 6.
8. Perpetrator interviewed: Indicate yes, no, or cannot determine. If the perpetrator is only interviewed by law enforcement, answer this item "no". You could answer "no" to this item and "yes" to item # 6.
9. Days to assignment: Enter the number of days from the entry in item # 4 to the date the CFS case was assigned to the initial assessment worker. If cannot determine, enter 999.
10. Days from assignment to initial assessment completion: Enter number of days from case assignment to "initial assessment completion date" field in N-Focus. If cannot determine, enter 999.
11. Supervisory consultation: Check "yes" or "no". A signature on the hard copy of the CWIS initial assessment form, safety plan, or county attorney memo is considered a "yes". An entry in the N-Focus CWIS narrative under "consultation point" is considered a "yes". If you cannot find any indication of supervisory review or involvement, answer this item "no".
12. Abuse finding: check appropriate item.
13. Neglect finding: check appropriate item.

14. Sexual abuse finding: check appropriate item.

15. Risk level-worker determined:	There is no likelihood of maltreatment (0 to .5)	00
	The likelihood of maltreatment is low (0.6 to 1)	01
	The likelihood of maltreatment is moderate (1. 1 to 2)	02
	The likelihood of maltreatment is significant (2.1 to 3)	03
	The likelihood of maltreatment is high (3.1 to 4)	04
	No risk assessment completed	99

Note: If there is not a risk rating associated with the assessment, the entry item should be 99.

16. Risk level-reviewer determined: Use the same code list as item # 15.

17-36. Are there safety influences: These are the questions from the CWIS Risk Evaluation and should be answered independently by the reviewer based upon the documentation from the file and from CWIS.. Check "yes" or "no", or check "cannot determine" if there is insufficient documentation to make a decision.

37. Safety plan needed: Check "yes", "no", or "cannot determine". This is based on the reviewer's judgment of the case information, which may be the same or different from the worker's judgment.

38. Safety plan established: check "yes", "no", or "cannot determine".

39. Safety plan sufficient: Check "yes", "no", "cannot determine", or "not applicable". This is the reviewer's judgment about the adequacy of the safety plan. If the answer to item # 38 is "no", then this item must be checked "NA".

40. Finding supported by documentation: Check "yes" or "no". This is the reviewer's judgment, based upon the total review of the case (initial assessment narratives, contact narratives, law enforcement reports, other reports, etc.) . Does the documentation support the finding. If the case record is lacking in adequate documentation, answer "no" to this item.

41. Should have been "Unfounded": Check "yes" or "no". Enter your reason in the comment section.

42. Should have been "Court Substantiated: Same as item # 41.

43. Should have been "Court Pending": Same as item # 41.

44. Should have been "Inconclusive: Same as item # 41.

45. Actual case disposition: Check appropriate item. Check (1) "closed and referred for services" if the worker asked the county attorney to file an abuse neglect petition, the county attorney declined to file, and the case was closed because the family refused services.

46. Same as item # 45.

47. Family assessment: Check "yes" or "no".

48. Quality of work: Check appropriate box. Use the following definitions-

Excellent, thorough, analytical: protocol followed; timely; no gaps in information; drawing conclusions based on risk; conclusions accurate; saw relevant collaterals; covered all issues/allegations.

Adequate: covered incident/allegation; followed protocol; decision regarding finding is justified; maltreatment focused.

Inadequate: desk investigation; unable to determine what was done; didn't interview key people; protocol not followed; gaps in information; no analysis; time lapse; decisions not justified.

49. Quality of documentation: Check appropriate box. Use the following definitions-

Thorough, analytical: able to follow sequence of events; analysis of information; thorough and complete; uses collateral information in decision making.

Adequate: sequence of events clear; decisions are clear and justified; there is collateral documentation.

Inadequate: no collateral reports/information sought or used; no analysis; unreadable; no documentation; incoherent documentation.

**NEBRASKA
CENTRAL REGISTRY STUDY
DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT**

1. Intake Number: _____
 2. Master Case Number: _____
 3. Reviewer: _____ (*enter code*)
 4. Date intake was received: _____
 5. Office: _____ (*enter code*)
 6. Interview protocol followed or reason to deviate from protocol is justified:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ Cannot Determine (2) _____
 7. Child interviewed by CPS:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ Cannot Determine (2) _____
 8. Perpetrator interviewed by CPS:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ Cannot Determine (2) _____
 9. Number of days from date intake received to assignment for initial assessment:
_____ days ☐ Cannot Determine (99)
 10. Number of days to complete initial assessment/investigation:
_____ days (*enter 999 if cannot determine*)
 11. Supervisor consulted in process or at conclusion of initial assessment:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0)
 12. Abuse finding: ☐ Inconclusive (1) ☐ Ct. Substantiated (2)
 ☐ Ct. Pending (3) ☐ Unfounded (4) _____
 13. Neglect finding: ☐ Inconclusive (1) ☐ Ct. Substantiated (2)
 ☐ Ct. Pending (3) ☐ Unfounded (4) _____
 14. Sexual abuse finding: ☐ Inconclusive (1) ☐ Ct. Substantiated (2)
 ☐ Ct. Pending (3) ☐ Unfounded (4) _____
 15. Level of risk determined by worker: _____ (*enter code 0-4*)
(*enter 99 if no risk assessment/risk rating completed*)
 16. Level of risk determined by case reviewer: _____ (*enter code 0-4*)
(*enter 99 if unable to complete risk assessment/risk rating due to lack of documentation*)
- NOTE: For 17-36, enter 99 if cannot determine due to lack of documentation.**
17. One or both parents intended to hurt child and do not show remorse:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ 99 _____

18. Parents' whereabouts are unknown:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ 99 _____
19. Living arrangements seriously endanger the physical health of the child:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ 99 _____
20. Both parents cannot/do not explain injuries and/or conditions:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ 99 _____
21. Maltreating parent exhibits no remorse or guilt:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ 99 _____
22. Child is 0-6 years old and/or cannot protect self:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ 99 _____
23. Child shows effects of maltreatment such as serious physical symptoms:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ 99 _____
24. Child is perceived in extremely negative terms by one or both of the parents:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ 99 _____
25. Child is seen by either parent as responsible for the parents' problems:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ 99 _____
26. Child shows effects of maltreatment such as serious emotional symptoms:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ 99 _____
27. Child is fearful of home situation:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ 99 _____
28. One or both parents cannot control behavior and/or are violent:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ 99 _____
29. Child has exceptional needs which parents cannot/ will not meet:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ 99 _____
30. No adult in the home will perform parental duties and responsibilities:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ 99 _____
31. One or both parents fear they will maltreat child and/or request placement:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ 99 _____
32. One or both parents lack knowledge, skill, motivation in parenting which affects the child's safety:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ 99 _____
33. One or both parents have failed to benefit from previous professional help:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ 99 _____
34. Family does not have resources to meet basic needs:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ 99 _____
35. There is some indication parents will flee:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ 99 _____

36. One or both parents overtly reject intervention:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ 99 _____
37. Safety plan needed:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ Cannot determine _____
38. Safety plan established or attempted:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) ☐ Cannot determine _____
39. Safety plan sufficient:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0)
☐ Cannot determine ☐ NA (99) *NOTE: If #38 is No, #39 is NA* _____
40. Finding is supported by documentation in CWIS and case record:
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0)
NOTE: Standard for inconclusive is "preponderance of the evidence" _____
- Comments:
41. Case should have been "unfounded":
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) _____
- Comments:
42. Case should have been "court substantiated":
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) _____
- Comments:
43. Case should have been "court pending":
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) _____
- Comments:
44. Case should have been "inconclusive":
☐ Yes (1) ☐ No (0) _____
- Comments:

45. Actual case disposition:
- ☐ Opened for ongoing voluntary services (0)
 - ☐ Closed and referred for services (1) (*includes petition request*)
 - ☐ Closed, no referrals made (2)
 - ☐ Cannot determine (3)
 - ☐ Opened for ongoing court ordered services (4) _____
46. Reviewers recommended case disposition:
- ☐ Opened for ongoing voluntary services (0)
 - ☐ Closed and referred for services (1) (*includes petition request*)
 - ☐ Closed, no referrals made (2)
 - ☐ Not enough information to recommend (3)
 - ☐ Opened for ongoing court ordered services (4) _____
47. If the case was opened for ongoing services, is there a family assessment:
- ☐ Yes (1)
 - ☐ No (0) _____
48. Quality of work/effort:
- ☐ Excellent, thorough, analytical (0)
 - ☐ Adequate (1)
 - ☐ Inadequate (2)
49. Quality of documentation:
- ☐ Thorough, analytical (0)
 - ☐ Adequate (1)
 - ☐ Inadequate (2)

CRSTUDY/



March 11, 1999

ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM - Protection and Safety: #1-99

To: Protection and Safety Workers
Protection and Safety Supervisors

From: Chris Hanus, Protection and Safety Division Administrator
Mark Martin, Protection and Safety Division Administrator
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John Weeks, Eastern Service Area Protection and Safety Administrator

RE: Requirements for Casework in Child Protective Service Cases

As you're aware, a recent study of "Inconclusive" Cases found in the Child Abuse and Neglect Central Register indicate significant issues that we must address to insure that the Register contains only names of individuals who should be placed on the Register. In addition, the Study identified that specific policies are not consistently followed in cases accepted for initial assessment.

The following direction highlights specific requirements in need of our attention. Staff will be expected to attend to these requirements in all cases. This memo does not replace the Protection and Safety Policy or Guidebooks.

1. Parents and all children in the family will be interviewed by the worker. If a child cannot be interviewed due to age or physical limitation, the worker needs to view the child to make an assessment of the child's development, vulnerability, etc. Interpreters are to be used if an individual has language or physical limitations. If parents or children are not interviewed, the reason will be clearly explained in the narrative. Possible reasons for not conducting interviews include: child's age/language skills; parent's refusal to speak to a worker; law enforcement has already done a comprehensive and thorough interview of the child AND there is no need for additional information to complete the initial assessment; unable to locate the individuals; law enforcement has interviewed the perpetrator and a further interview is not necessary to complete the risk assessment.

2. All cases accepted for initial assessment will include an assessment of risk. This assessment will be clearly documented in the case record.
3. All cases accepted for initial assessment will include documentation of a safety plan when needed. If there are no safety issues, this will be clearly documented.
4. In addition to documentation of risk assessments and safety plans, case records will include specific documentation concerning the worker decision on the case status determination and the disposition of the case. The documentation will be sufficient to reflect the decisions made and include documents and information used for corroboration (clearly identifying witnesses, copies of law enforcement reports, court orders, medical reports, etc.).
5. There will be a supervisory review of all cases.

We recognize your commitment to keeping children safe and providing the best possible services. The Study provides us with a challenge as well as an opportunity to improve our system and renew the public confidence in the validity of the Central Register. We appreciate your contribution to those improvements. Please let us know if you have any questions or suggestions.

cc Ron Ross, HHS Director
Dennis Loose, HHS Deputy Director
Service Area Administrators
Protection and Safety Division Staff